

President's Message

The Voice * Winter 2011

Change

By Sybil Finken and Ann Knighton
Co-Presidents

Change.

It's a word that evokes emotion in all of us albeit different emotions: Excitement, trepidation, calm, and anxiety. As VOR's new Co-Presidents we can honestly say we've experienced all of these emotions when it became apparent we would be called upon to lead VOR.

Upon our election, however, the emotions felt were humility, honor and determination - a determination to achieve VOR's mission by addressing the urgencies facing individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Each of us has served VOR in a leadership capacity for many, many years. We have been active VOR members for a combined 27 years, and have served as State Coordinators and Board Members for many of these years.

As parents of adults with profound intellectual disabilities receiving high quality care in public ICFs/MR, we have been helped by VOR over the years in countless ways and we relate and empathize with families of all persons with intellectual disabilities who are struggling to access *or maintain* adequate supports – whether in their family homes, smaller settings, or in ICFs/MR.

In our states of Iowa (Sybil) and Georgia (Ann), we have dealt with DOJ threats (ongoing in Georgia), along with the usual threats by other advocacy groups who seek to dismantle any sort of specialized services in favor of their definition of “normal.”

Each of us has faced (or are facing) the same urgencies and threats in our states as VOR's members and others have faced across the country. Throughout these challenges we have counted on VOR to be there, and we have not been let down.

VOR is there for you too.

As Ann once said, “We have carried the banner, stepped up to the plate, and risen to the issues, knowing that we have much work to do and many miles yet to go.” VOR will walk these miles with you.